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593 only by a sister), and *mukãi* (sister, spoken only by a brother). In
[561] a polygynous household each of the wives is mother to all the children and each of the children is *huva* or *manja*[1] to all the others.
848 Illegitimate children are not stigmatized but since they belong to
● 567 the mother they have a distinct designation.[2] Slaves or former slaves have a status within the household and village which to the ordinary observer does not differ from that of the children: they are treated much as the children and they may carry on in all matters social and economic much as though they were members of the family. I have noticed, however, that when there is a call for labour, the lot falls oftener to one of these 'children-born-by-day'[3] whether he was a war-captive or a pawn.

567 Both slavery and the polygynous household, two institutions
595 manifestly and intimately inter-related, are still a part of the
178 Umbundu social structure, but neither the one nor the other now has the importance which it formerly had. Neither of these institutions is part of the present and personal experience of the great majority of Umbundu households.

Kinship

596 *Blood Relatives* (*Epata*). The relationships of the wider kinship
602 groups are for the most part extensions of those of the household.
621 The child learns them very early in life owing to the fact that the village community into which he is born is only a part of this larger kinship group. Nearly all of the villagers belong to the same *epata* or extended family, which includes both lines of descent. Most of them belong to the father's family (*oluse*), and the mother's family (*olutina*) may also be represented. The fact is that most of the adults of the village are father or mother to nearly every child and most of the children are brothers or sisters. Those of his coevals who do not bear this relation to him are otherwise related and are also potential spouses or potential relatives-in-law.

[1] This distinction *yesepakai* (lit. 'of the jealousy of women') may be made but it is not applied in ordinary speech.

[2] *Omõlã a ngenda-la-ina* (lit. 'child of goes-with-mother').

[3] *Omãlã-va-citiwa-lutanya*. Cf. 'child of my calves', Luganda expression and attitudes, L. P. Mair, *An African People in the Twentieth Century* (London, 1934), p. 32 f.

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The Ovimbundu are not ordinary cannibals, if indeed that term may be applied to any people in Africa, nor do the commoners of the Ovimbundu ever eat human flesh on their own account, but no king may ever reign or be considered as regularly enthroned until he has 'eaten Ekongo'.[1] The cannibalism traditionally ascribed to Wambu-Kalunga is also a case in point.[2] Other human sacrifices practised by the 'Jagas' and described by Battell also have their counterparts in the practices of the Umbundu kingdoms.[3] The mode of the burial of the dead described by Battell[4] is essentially that which has been used, at least until the last few years, for the kings and the other 'holy'[5] men of the Ovimbundu, except that where rock caves are available the use of them has been adopted and in Kasongi cairns were used. The sitting posture and the sacrifice of wives or slaves and cattle (or of substitutes) are the important points, and these have everywhere been used for the classes mentioned, until quite recently.

The custom of keeping boys captured from the enemy and training them to be fearless warriors amid the terrors of the country has a parallel in the Umbundu custom of the king's slaves,[6] who came from another land[7] and would therefore do the king's bidding without fear, favour, or consideration of family feeling. They often reached high position and certain of the king's ministers always came from among them. There seem to be many recollections of the 'Jagas' in the customs of the kings' sons.[8] Names of certain of the officials seem to have survived, as, for example, Mani (*muēlē*) Lumbo, Mani-Curio (*Muēkalia*), Golambolo (*Ngalamboli*), Tendala (*Candala*), Ukuetambo,[9] &c. Careful linguistic studies would doubtless reveal many remains of the speech

[1] *Oku lia Ekongo*—lit. 'to eat the Old One'. This is a ritual feast in which the flesh of a specially fattened slave is eaten mixed with the flesh of various animals. See Ravenstein, op. cit., p. 33, note 3. Magyar described this custom, calling it '*Ouri-Kongo*', op. cit., pp. 275 ff.

[2] See *supra*, p. 176.

[3] Compare Ravenstein, op. cit.

[4] Op. cit., p. 34 f.

[5] 'Holy' in the sense of spirit possessed—the king, the hunter, the medical practitioner, and the smith.

[6] *Ocinduli cosoma*, singular. May there be some recollection of 'Kinguri' (= Cinguli) in this word?

[7] In Bailundu the *ovinduli viosoma* (plural) came mostly from Luandu, i.e. the Songo country across the Kuanza—further evidence of connexion with Lunda emigrants.

[8] *Omālā volosoma*, used collectively of all the royal families of the Ovimbundu.

[9] Cavazzi, op. cit., pp. 206 f., 211.

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175x 177 439 *European Influences 1600–1770.* The first European contact of the Ovimbundu or of the 'proto-Ovimbundu' was without doubt for purposes of trade. The first record which we have of any such contact is in *Andrew Battell in Guinea.* About 1600 the governor, as the chief trader,[1] sent his prisoner Battell on trading expeditions along the Benguela coast. At the Bahia das Vaccas, the Ndombe, a cattle-keeping people, were met. They supplied the Europeans with produce,[2] including cattle and 'the famous sheep which have five quarters',[3] but *not* with the principal article of commerce, for as another of the conquistadores noted, 'In this kingdom there is no slave trade, for it is not their custom to sell each other.'[4] This lack was soon supplied by 'proto-Ovimbundu' when, on the next voyage, Battell with the 'Portugals and Mulattos' found the encampment of 'Jagas' at the mouth of the Keve River, from Battell's account of which we have already quoted.[5] Although hardly recognized as such at the time, this, it seems, was the beginning of a long commercial partnership. As long as the 'Jagas' continued 'to take the spoil of the land', they supplied many slaves[6] for the trade, and after they settled they became traders both in direct European employ and on their own account.

[567]

439 567 797 175x The early European settlements in Africa were made with the hope of finding gold, but although that metal was not found in the Congo or Angola, black gold—human gold—soon proved to be equally profitable. There was a religious motive in the Portuguese discoveries, for from the time of Prince Henry the Navigator, his captains were bidden to 'plant the Cross on some new headland'. With every ship priests went out to convert the heathen. Some priests doubtless did good work but more of them, both individually and as members of the various orders, early came to the conclusion that the best way to convert the heathen was to sell

[1] The governors continued to engage in trade openly, until forbidden by the law of 17 Sept. 1721, and then, says Lopes de Lima, some complied, while others did not (*Ensaios*, part i, p. 84).

[2] A. Battell, p. 16.

[3] L. Cordeiro (ed.), 1574–1620, *Da Mina ao Cabo Negro segundo Garcia Mendes Castello Branco*, p. 34. The reference is to the fat-tailed sheep of the Hottentots and their neighbours. This is perhaps the first reference to it on the west coast.

[4] Ibid., 1593–1631, *Terras e minas africanas segundo Balthazar Rebello de Aragão*, p. 15.

[5] *Supra*, p. 182 f.

[6] Battell, pp. 20, 28; L. Cordeiro (ed.), 1574–1620, *Da Mina ao Cabo Negro segundo Garcia Mendes Castello Branco*, p. 17.

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him off where he would have the double benefit of regular work and Christian doctrine. In 1560 the Bishop of São Thomé wrote that 'he doubted that the people of the kingdom of Angola could be made Catholics unless the King would allow Trade'.[1] The slaves were baptized by the bishop by the boatload—rowed along the wharf of Luanda. The Jesuits profited greatly by the slave-trade, employing continuously three of their own ships. The religious motive was thus early swallowed up by the commercial and profit motive. Commerce was almost entirely taken up with the slave-trade. Four-fifths of the value of all exports were slaves.[2]

During the first hundred years of the Colony of Angola a million slaves were exported,[3] and three million would probably be a very conservative estimate of the total. As long as the oversea slave traffic remained legal, little effort seems to have been made to develop other exports. In spite of protests and until 1832, ivory remained a monopoly of the royal treasury with regulations which discouraged its export. Such products as gum copal and orchilia only began to be exported in 1832–8. The only product of any importance which had also been exported in the time of the slave-trade was bees-wax. The slave-trade was first questioned in 1831, it was formally prohibited in 1836, but for many years enforcement was not accomplished. During the 250 years of the oversea slave-trade, Angola was in reality a dependency of Brazil.[4] When Brazil became independent, there was a movement in Benguela for union with that country.[5] So complete was the commercial domination of Brazil that Lisbon merchants had hardly anything to do with the Angolan trade. Lopes de Lima points out that the colony was also spiritually dominated by Brazil, and attributes the noteworthy religious decadence not only to the preoccupation of the clergy with the slave-trade, but also to the fact that from 1677 until 1845 the diocese of Angola and Congo was a part of the Metropolitan archdiocese of Bahia. The one great fact with regard to Angola of the sixteenth, seventeenth,

[1] It had been a royal monopoly and allowed only through Kongo. This letter is from the National Archives of the Torre do Tombo and quoted by Lopes de Lima, *Ensaios*, p. ix.

[2] Statistics given by Lopes de Lima, *Ensaios*, part i, p. 69 f.

[3] Cadornega, *História Geral das Guerras Angolanas* (1680–1), vol. iii, p. 254 (also quoted by Paiva Manso).

[4] Lopes de Lima, *Ensaios*, part i, p. 74; J. P. Oliveira Martins, *O Brasil e as Colónias Portuguezas*, p. 18.

[5] Lopes de Lima, op. cit., p. 127.

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eighteenth, and much of the nineteenth century, then, was the slave-trade.

Most of the historical treatises on Angola are little more than chronological lists of battles and expeditions. The relation of these events to the main facts, i.e. to the economic facts, has rarely been made. Two or three presídios were founded with the hope of controlling nearby mineral deposits,[1] whether real or supposed, but all the rest were intended as spearheads for trade or to protect existing trade. Many of the military expeditions were raids with an obvious end in view; others were rearguard actions to protect a more or less successful raid of the same sort; others were retaliations for reprisals or vice versa. Practically all of the soldiers who were free men, from the captain-general down, were also traders, and some who were not free were traders on account of others. There may have been a few expeditions which had less immediate connexion with trade, for there were genuine explorers in those early days, even as more recently.

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There would be little interest or profit in cataloguing the military expeditions which had, or seem to have had, contact with the Ovimbundu or with their predecessors in the land during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. There were only a very few of real significance. During the seventeenth century many raids were made from Massangano across Libolo to the edge of or into the Benguela Highland, and likewise there were many actions between the garrisons of Benguela and Caconda and the inhabitants of the plateau. In 1607 Balthazar Rebello de Aragão set out to cross Africa and had to turn back after going eighty leagues, but his own report was so scanty that even the direction he took cannot be determined.[2] In 1645, while the Dutch controlled Luanda and the coast, there was a raid which was said to have reached Bailundu.[3] The very scanty references to this raid give no description of the inhabitants, but since there seems to be no Bailundu tradition with regard to it, I conclude that the present dynasty (beyond the establishment of which tradition hardly goes) must have been founded since that date. About 1650 there was a raid across Libolo as far as the Keve River which found a cattle-rearing

[1] e.g. Benguela Velha and Cambambe.

[2] L. Cordeiro (ed.), 1593–1620, *Terras e minas africanas segundo Balthazar Rebello de Aragão*, p. 15.

[3] *Catálogo dos Governadores*, p. 374; Lopes de Lima, *Ensaios*, part i, p. 99.

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Bailundu (and its dependent states), or through Wambu and Ciyaka, while the road to Luanda lay either through Ndulu or Bailundu, these other kingdoms were not slow in following along the path of commercial success. In Ngalangi the king himself took a very active interest in trade and annually sent a royal caravan to Benguela, taking care to get a pass from the captain of the fort at Caconda. Other kings also adopted the practice of the royal caravan,[1] but the kings of the principal kingdoms were slow to give up raiding, plunder, and warfare as a manner of life[2]—a custom which became distasteful to their subjects in proportion as trade became more profitable and attractive.

In addition to those already named, there were other historical events and policies which contributed toward the development of trade during this period. The abolition in 1834 of the monopoly in ivory,[3] which the royal treasury had held since the beginning, was of great importance, and this, in turn, abetted in perpetuating the slave-trade, now a contraband, for ivory always had been brought from the interior on the backs of slaves, and it must not be supposed that this would suddenly be stopped, especially since ivory had just become much more valuable. According to Bastos,[4] slaves for this contraband trade continued to be cheap and plentiful until the eighties, which was probably due in part to the large supply offered. Another reason was perhaps that the contraband oversea trade was largely in the hands of foreigners—Brazilians, Spaniards, and Americans, who were not always reliable in the matter of paying for their cargoes.[5]

[1] *Omaka*, which had special routines and prerogatives. Other types of caravans were named from the products which they carried or conducted.

[2] See Lopes de Lima, *Ensaios*, part ii, p. 54: 'Bailundo . . . a warlike people, of the race of "Jagas", whose chief is always on a campaign'; Magyar, *Reisen*, many references, but especially pp. 290 ff., 383–420; Silva Porto, op. cit., p. 82 f., 160; *Missionary Herald*, 1883, p. 339; 1884, pp. 145 f., 504 f.; 1885, pp. 279, 375 f.; 1886, p. 228 f.; 1887, p. 106; 1889, pp. 67, 535; 1890, p. 292, &c.

[3] From 1618 (B. Rebello de Aragão, p. 14) until 1834 (Saldanha da Gama, p. 86), all critics agreed that this monopoly even defeated its own purpose, i.e. revenue; for, they said, the conditions and regulations were so onerous that the natives could not afford to bring ivory to the coast. Available statistics show that there was very little export of ivory until 1835 (Lopes de Lima, *Ensaios*).

[4] A. Bastos, *Monographia de Catumbella*, pp. 18, 25. He gives prices varying from 5$000 to 18$000 or even 20$000, and remarks that slaves were later designated as servants, redeemed ones, contracted labourers, &c. The milreis (1$000) was then worth about $1.10. Monteiro (*vide infra*) says that in the sixties 'a little nigger' could be had for 5*s*.

[5] J. J. Monteiro, *Angola and the River Congo*, pp. 131–4. Monteiro attributes

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influences. The stock to which the common people belong were wearers of skins, which is true of many of them to the present time. The people from whom the ruling houses came have a highly developed weaving industry. The 'Ngangela' neighbours, who have also contributed elements to the racial make-up of the Ovimbundu, make and use bark-cloth. The Ovimbundu evidently gave up the use of skins for clothing more than a hundred years ago.[1] This fact, and the additional one that they never developed weaving or bark-cloth industries, was probably due to their early and widespread use of trade-cloth. Rum came with the slave-trade from Brazil. They were almost inseparable. The ships which fetched the slaves came laden with rum distilled in Brazil. The rum was used in buying the slaves, and much more of it was consumed by Ovimbundu—traders, chiefs, and retainers—than by the interior people. Thus, while the slave-trade had such a disruptive influence in the life of the interior tribes, rum did much to corrupt the Ovimbundu. Native tradition[2] and the accounts of early travellers agree on this point. Rum continued to come from Brazil and from other countries or oversea colonies all through this early period, but import was partly supplanted by distillation at the coast, and this process was soon learned by the Ovimbundu themselves.

The part which the Umbundu trade had in spreading the goods and uses of the outside world is a fascinating subject and one which would repay study. Ethnographical and historical knowledge of Central Africa is not yet so extensive or precise that the dates and places of these movements can be plotted with certainty. Professor C. M. Doke records that Nkumine, who ruled the Lamba sometime before 1840, sold many of his people 'as slaves to the Mbundu traders from the West Coast for calico, guns, and powder'.[3] It is important to remember that throughout this period the Ovimbundu were for all this part of Africa the chief intermediaries in the slave-trade. These activities affected the ultimate

[1] See Magyar, *passim*.

[2] A Ngalangi tradition says that from the time of King Ndumba II (*c.* 1840) rum was so plentiful that it was poured into troughs, whence it was lapped up by all—men, women, and children. A constant difficulty encountered by the early missionaries was the objection of chiefs and their counsellors to the missionaries' refusal to give liberal presents of rum, as did all the traders.

[3] C. M. Doke, *The Lambas of Northern Rhodesia* (London: Harrap, 1931), pp. 36, 37.

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physical composition of the Ovimbundu themselves, and also their character and accepted attitudes. Livingstone told of the beginning of their trade with the Makololo in 1850, and how they had visited the Barotse 'in ancient times'.[1] These items fit into the picture of that early period of trading activities which is had from studying Umbundu traditional history in the light of documents such as Silva Porto's diaries, Magyar's account,[2] the historical monograph of Augusto Bastos, the comments of travellers,[3] and of the early missionaries.

Period of the Rubber Trade, 1874–1911. Turning now to the rubber trade, that time may conveniently be divided into three periods: from 1874 until 1886, during which only 'first-class' rubber (from the plants themselves)[4] was exported; from 1886, when the discovery of 'second-class' or 'red rubber' (from a root)[5] caused a great boom which lasted until 1900; and, finally, the period of decline until the rubber export stopped in 1916, though for the Ovimbundu it had already practically stopped several years earlier.

Of the older exports only bees-wax and ivory survived along with rubber. The former of these was somewhat neglected, while the importance of the latter continued in Benguela only until about 1893 when the frontier of the Congo was closed. Bastos remarks that after 1900 not a single tusk appeared.[6] Already in 1880 Silva Porto had to go beyond Lunda to the middle Kasai before he found ivory.[7] At that time most of the ivory trade was in the hands of Viye traders. Between 2 November 1879, when Silva Porto left Catumbela, and 26 November when he reached Belmonte (Viye), there passed him about forty caravans on their way to the coast. Of these, ten carried ivory, practically all of which

[1] D. Livingstone, op. cit., p. 91 f. The business-like methods of the Ovimbundu were commented upon later, see op. cit., p. 271.

[2] The picture which Magyar (*Reisen in Süd-Afrika*) gives of Umbundu life in that early period is very good, but for an understanding of many terms used a knowledge of Portuguese and Umbundu is quite necessary. His truthfulness with regard to the slave-trade must be questioned when confronted by evidence from Valdez, Monteiro, and especially from Bastos.

[3] Valdez, op. cit.; Monteiro, op. cit.; Graça, op. cit.; Serpa Pinto, op. cit.; Capello and Ivens, *From Benguella to the Territory of Yacca.*

[4] Principally *Landolphia*, which are big woody climbers; also the tall and stately *Funtumia elastica.* [5] Especially the *Carpodinus chylorrhiza.*

[6] Bastos, op. cit., p. 39. From this time until 1913 Angola continued to export ivory in ever-decreasing quantities, but from the port of Mossamedes and therefore not from the Umbundu country.

[7] *Boletim Soc. Geog. Lisboa, 6a Ser.*, pp. 189 f., 256.

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It must not be supposed that trade has been abandoned. Every sale or exchange of field or garden produce is a serious trading operation. Produce will often be carried a very long way for a very small advantage, or even for no apparent gain. The successively lower economic levels to which the colony, and especially the natives, have fallen since the close of the rubber trade is a factor. Individual trading, involving journeys into even such distant regions as Ovamboland, is a latter-day development since European rule has made for greater personal security.

Another factor which operated to end all large-scale trading operations of the Ovimbundu was the disappearance of the traffic in human beings. It has been shown that even before they ruled over the Ovimbundu the 'Jagas' were leading intermediaries in this traffic, and the Ovimbundu have continued in this role right down to the period under review. Whatever name or form it bore at the coast, in the interior the traffic was the same. At the height of the rubber boom this traffic, along with other activities, suffered a decline, being somewhat less profitable than rubber. At that time came the peak of the rum trade and the demoralization which it brought turned the point of the 'contract labour' traffic in upon the Ovimbundu themselves. Such Umbundu customs as getting into debt, the pawning of relatives, and also such factors as times of food scarcity, quickly taken advantage of by the traders, served to exacerbate the hardships, and the result was the native uprising of 1902 known as the 'Bailundu Campaign', but extending beyond the limits of Bailundu. The effects of this uprising upon trade have already been noted. Pending investigation of its causes, the export of 'contract labourers' was stopped,[1] but the practice was soon resumed. The scandalous conditions then obtaining in the neighbouring 'Congo Free State' almost from its founding until 1908 greatly aided and abetted the slave-traffic, however much this new frontier may have interfered with trade in ivory and rubber. Trade with the *revoltés* was particularly lucrative to Ovimbundu and other traders of Angola. Powder and arms were an especially important item in this trade.

and just under the rim of the Highland. In 1916 construction stopped at Chinguar (312 miles and on the edge of Viye) until after World War I. It was completed to the Angola frontier in 1929 and the Belgian section finished in 1931, with transcontinental connexion at Elizabethville.

[1] Cabral Moncada, op. cit.; Massano de Amorim, *Relatorio sôbre os acontecimentos do Bailundo* (Loanda, 1903); *Missionary Herald*, 1903, p. 69.

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It was only with the beginning of World War I that trade in powder and fire-arms was stopped. For more than a century Portuguese patriots and thinkers had been insisting upon the necessity for ending the export of man-power, so evidently impoverishing in its effects on the life of the colony.[1] Law succeeded law, and regulation followed regulation, but there was little real change.[2] With the Republic,[3] however, real changes began. Conditions were investigated,[4] and although complete and immediate reform could hardly have been expected, changes did begin. Provisions for manumission upon presentation to authority were made and carried out. Repatriation from island and mainland plantations began to be undertaken. This was the origin of small communities of Cokue and other 'Ngangela' people now living at various points in the Umbundu country. From the plantations they were repatriated to 'their places of origin', which were, however, not their own homes but the places whence they had been sold into servitude. Under various regulatory practices, contract labour has been continued down to the present day. The depression which came to Central Africa in 1930 reduced the demand to a minimum, and for a few years it did not represent a serious problem in the life of the Ovimbundu. There was a time of great activity in road building (approximately 1915–32) when the demands for labour were a serious problem to Umbundu life. Soon after the opening of World War II a strong demand for colonial products revived the industries of Angola and stimulated the creation of new ones. The consequent demand for labour and the means used to supply it have come to constitute the most severe trial which has yet come to the Ovimbundu. Their docility has made this service bear more hardly on them than on some other people of the colony. Their

[1] e.g. Saldanha da Gama, *Memoria*, 1814; Sá da Bandeira, 1839; Lopes de Lima, *Ensaios* (1846), pp. xxxviii, 6 f., 44 f.; Casmiro, *Africa Nostra*, p. 60 f.

[2] The principal laws were promulgated as follows: 1836 (Formal abolition of the traffic); 1839 (Authorizing co-operation with the international naval squadron); 1840, 1841, 1845 (Supplementary ordinances); 1875 (Law of Liberation and regulation of contract labour); 1878, 1889 (Further regulations); 1899 (Dealing with 'corrective labour'); 1902, 1903 (Further regulation of recruitment).

[3] Proclaimed in Portugal, 5 Oct., 1910.

[4] A Commission came from Lisbon that same year and took testimony throughout the colony. For conditions just previous to the Republic, see Nevinson, op. cit.; C. A. Swan, *The Slavery of To-day* (1909); H. R. F. Bourne, *Slave Traffic in Portuguese Africa* (1908); W. A. Cadbury, *Labour in Portuguese West Africa* (2nd ed. 1910); C. Harding, *In Remotest Barotseland* (1905).

692 Hambly and Childs seem to suggest that any case might be referred to the
● 527 chief for his decision: "Even a slave used to have rights of appeal to the king if he were starved or beaten without cause".(1) Neither describes the composition of the courts or the mechanism of appeal.

Legal procedure

695 Childs writes rather obscurely "Cases might be settled by ordeal or by decision of the king, and there was therefore room for appeal and retrial".(2)

One kind of ordeal, the *ombulungu* or poison ordeal, is described by Hambly:(3) It was used (only?) when the accused was thought to have committed murder by poison or sorcery. (If weapons were used, the accuser, usually a relative of the deceased, had the right to kill the murderer with the same kind of weapon.) If a woman were accused in this way, her son or brother would take her place in the poison ordeal.

The complainant in a suit is called *ombile*, the defendant *ovilue*, and the witness *uvangi*. Cushman states that no evidence is ever ruled out of court, and that each witness is required to give a complete account of all his dealings with the persons concerned in the case, so that the court may know on which side he is likely to be prejudiced.(4) Hambly(5) adds that formerly a witness had to make recompense to the man about whom he had told a lie, and probably received a beating as well. According to Cushman an Umbundu court may find that both parties are to blame in a case, and may fine or penalise both according to the degree of guilt. "If the chief is not satisfied, he simply gets up and leaves the court circle. This indicates that the evidence has not been satisfactory and more must be presented."(6)

672 In the absence of the delinquent, responsibility for crime was formerly transferred to a relative. If a thief escaped, responsibility would rest with a brother, a father, or a son. The mother's brother was often held responsible for the misdeeds of his sister's children, and would be expected to pay their debts.(7)

Punishments

685 A thief was punished by a beating and a fine paid to the persons from whom he had stolen.(8) An habitual thief was sold into slavery. He might be redeemed, but only if the authorities considered his reformation complete.(9) Murder was punishable by death, although this penalty might
682 be avoided by a heavy fine paid to the relatives, usually the mother,
684 mother's brother, or sister's son of the deceased. If the victim were of the royal family, the murderer might be put to death after the payment of the fine. The punishment for women murderers was the same as for men.(10) In adultery the woman was not punished, but a man was punished in the same way as a murderer, i.e. by death or a heavy fine. (Hambly gives the fine

(1) Hambly, op.cit., p.201.
(2) 1949, p.21.
(3) op.cit., p.203.
(4) 1944, pp.38-9.
(5) op.cit., p.201.
(6) 1944, p.39.
(7) Hambly, op.cit., p.201.
(8) Ibid., p.202.
(9) Cushman, 1944, p.39.
(10) Hambly, op.cit., pp.202-3.

586 When a woman divorces her husband to marry another man, she takes to her home all children under three years of age; other children go to the home of her parents.(1) There is no information concerning the fate of children when the man divorces his wife.

[691] Divorce cases are apparently brought before the court of the village headman only where the return of the marriage payment to the husband is long delayed or in some way unsatisfactory.(2)

LAND TENURE

423 There is virtually no information on Umbundu land usage. Childs states that land is inherited in the paternal line, i.e. by brother or son. Hambly suggests that "The right to land depends on its use and allotment by a chief (?) at the time of founding a village," and that "Rights seem to have been well defined and there was always enough room for a stranger". The meaning of neither of these statements is very clear.(3)

DOMESTIC SLAVERY

567 [672] Slaves were formerly taken in war, and, until very recently, as a result of a person's inability to pay his debts. In such a case not the debtor, but the debtor's sister's children were taken as slaves by the creditor. If the debt was paid later, the children were set free.(4) Today children instead of being sold into slavery may be expected to work for the creditor to pay off the debts of the mother's brother.(5) Childs writes "Slaves or former slaves have a status within the household or village which to the ordinary observer does not differ from that of the children: they are treated much as the children and they may carry on in all matters social and economic as though they were members of the family". He adds however that when there is a call for labour, the lot falls more often to a slave or a pawn.(6) Hambly, however, notes that formerly the master had rights of punishment including the death sentence, although an ill-treated slave might appeal to the village headman. Slave women were frequently taken as concubines, but were not lent out as prostitutes. A slave woman who married a free man would revert to her master along with her children when her husband died. All children of slaves became slaves of the master, who could dispose of the girls in marriage. If he himself married a slave girl, she would, at his death, become the property of his eldest brother and her children would go with her, although in some instances the woman and children might go to the mother's brother's son.

[727] It seems likely (although it is nowhere stated) that there was a clear distinction between slaves captured in war and slaves taken as a result of a debt; possibly the information quoted above from Hambly refers mainly to war captives.

(1) Hambly, op.cit., pp.182-3. (2) Ibid., p.183.
(3) Hambly, op.cit., p.201. Hambly states here that the system of land distribution is described in a later section of his book, but this section merely refers back to these remarks.
(4) Bastos (1909, p.33) adds that if a father redeemed his children, the maternal uncle lost his right to sell them into slavery.
(5) Hambly, op.cit., p.205. (6) 1949, p.42.

A man slave might become a blacksmith or a hunter, although his work was always for his master. He was also required to fight for his master in case of war.(1)

RELIGION AND MAGIC

Information on Umbundu religion and magic is very slight, being practically confined to a few items collected by Hambly from his Umbundu interpreter,(2) and a more coherent article by Tucker, primarily on divination.(3)

THE SUPREME BEING

Suku, the Supreme Being, is thought of as the creator of mountains, rivers, sky and human beings.(4) His attributes have not been described.

CONCEPTS OF SPIRIT(5)

The body *(etimba)* is thought of as having *omuenyo* (breath or life), and containing the *ocililemba* (spirit or soul). The *ocililemba* is visible in a person's shadow in the daytime, and during sleep it has adventures of its own, which it reports to the sleeper through dreams *(olonjoi)*. At death it leaves the body, but lingers nearby, accompanying the body to the interment, still in the form of a shadow. It then becomes an *ocilulu* (ghost), and may wander where it pleases. Sometimes it may be seen passing with superhuman swiftness through the village, uttering weird cries or calling pigs or chickens as the person used to do while alive. It chooses one of the households as a home, and indicates its wish to stay there by causing illness among the householders. The victim when he has learned the cause of his illness from the diviner places himself in a favourable condition to receive the spirit by performing a ceremony which includes going into a trance.(6) When this ceremony has been performed the *ocilulu* (ghost) becomes an *ondele*, which appears to be a generic name for ancestral (and other?) spirits. It is not clear from Tucker's description whether the relatives of the deceased always wait for this intimation of the wish of the *ocilulu* for a home, or whether the ceremonies may sometimes be performed immediately after death. Nor does she give any information regarding the relatives with whom the *ocilulu* usually chooses to live. She states that spirits of paternal ancestors are less feared than those of maternal ancestors, for while the former are usually satisfied with a hunt, a beer-drinking and a feast held in their honour, the latter are malignant and may "eat" children and occasionally adults also.

The *ehamba* (sing. *ehamba*) "are the peaceful spirits of ancestors of long ago, who have already had the trance ceremony performed for them, and thus have a home and ... standing in the other world". (Tucker does not indicate how much time must pass before a spirit becomes a *ehamba*.(7))

(1) Hambly, 1934, p.206.
(2) Op.cit., chap.IX.
(3) 1940.
(4) Hambly, op.cit., p.262.
(5) Based on Tucker, op.cit. unless otherwise stated.
(6) Tucker does not describe this ritual.
(7) It may be noted that among the Nganguela peoples to the east, the *ehamba* are the forms taken by ancestral spirits when they wish to harass their descendants. See McCulloch 1951, p.75.

584 you." There is no infant betrothal. There is not and never was any
[567] compulsion of a girl in marriage, but slave girls were disposed of in marriage by their masters.

832 A girl is not allowed to do anything to show that she loves a boy, for it would be a great shame for her to tell the boy that she loves him. Often a girl who prefers a boy will pretend that she does not like him.
[539] The Ovimbundu have a story which states that a man said, "I will bring my cow to the green grass"; he did so, but the cow would not eat. This expresses the idea that a boy would not like a girl who confessed a preference for him.

MARRIAGE

585 The prospective bride chooses one married woman and six unmarried girls to accompany her to the house prepared by her husband. Here a feast consisting of a pig and some chickens is provided by the husband for the relatives of both families. For three nights the girl returns to the house of her parents while the boy sleeps at his home. The married woman and six girls sleep at the house prepared by the bridegroom. During these days beer is provided by the boy's parents. The prospective husband is ironically addressed as *sandombua*. *Ndombua* means bridegroom, *sa* is an abbreviation of *isia* meaning father. The term "father bridegroom" refers to the fact that the youth is a potential husband only; the marriage has not been consummated.

On the fourth day the bride brings her supply of domestic utensils. These are the cooking pots (*olombia*); the wooden spoons (*ovito*); the brush of grass for sweeping (*olueyo*); some meal; also the pounder (*upi*). For the first month the wife is not allowed to cook in her own home; she cooks food in the home of her husband's parents and sends
[269] it to the council house (*onjango*) where her husband takes his meals with other men according to Umbundu custom. At the end of the first month of married life the mother of the husband invites any three old women who have been happily married to lay the hearth
[782] stones in the new home. Each of the old women brings a stone for the hearth. A chicken is killed and its blood is sprinkled on the hearth stones. While the young wife is preparing food at the new hearth, she is helped by the old women. If the girl is stirring with the big wooden spoon, one of the old women places her own hands over those of the girl. There is this kind of guidance in every action.

I understand that at the present day virginity in a bride is not so highly valued as in former days. The old custom was an examination

3: Hambly E-5 (1929-1930) 1934 FP13 Mbundu FP13

601

Kukululu or *sekululu*. These terms are applicable to my father's father's brother, my father's father's brother's wife; my father's father's sister's husband; and my mother's father (the reciprocal *onekulu* describes the reciprocals, brother's son's son; husband's brother's son's son; wife's brother's son's son; daughter's son).

Maikulu. This designation, which is derived from *mai*, meaning mother, and *kulu*, an old person, is applied to my father's mother (reciprocal, *onekulu yange*, son's son). *Maikulu* also means my father's father's sister; my mother's mother; my mother's mother's brother's wife; and my mother's mother's sister (the reciprocal is *onekulu* which equals the English reciprocals brother's son's son; daughter's son; husband's daughter's child; and sister's daughter's child).

This completes the second generation of ascendants.

NOTE: Ngonga's wife uses the names *maikulu* and *kukululu* for those relatives of her husband to whom Ngonga himself applies those terms. These relatives call Ngonga's wife *onekulu*.

TABLE D

(See Table E IV and V, also Table F II, IV and V)

SOME OF NGONGA'S DESCENDANTS

Nunulu or *useli* is my first-born son. Other sons are *omola*, meaning child. *Omola ulume* means a male child. *Omola ukai* is a female child. *Useli* also means a first daughter (the reciprocal for these terms is *tate*, meaning father).

Omolange means my child. I apply the word, not only to my own children, but to my elder brother's son (reciprocal, *tate*, father's younger brother); to my elder brother's daughter; and to my younger brother's son.

Ndatembo. The word is applied to my son's wife; my daughter's husband; my elder brother's son's wife; my elder brother's daughter's husband; and my younger brother's son's wife (the same word *ndatembo* is used for the reciprocals of these terms; namely, husband's father; wife's father; husband's father's younger brother; wife's father's younger brother; and husband's father's elder brother).

601 The foregoing classificatory system of relationship is not peculiar to the Ovimbundu, but is a cultural trait of many Bantu-speaking 1.71. and some Sudanic-speaking Negroes. The similarity of the Umbundu system to those of surrounding peoples in Rhodesia and the Congo will be pointed out in chapters dealing with culture contacts.

591 When describing marriage rites reference was made to the fact that a wife goes to live near her husband's relatives; the system is therefore patrilocal. The limited family consists of husband and 592 wife (or wives) with their children. The greatest number of wives (595) observed in the family of a commoner was four, and in the family of a king eleven. A household sometimes contains adopted children, [597] also domestic slaves (pawns) who are working to pay off debts for [567] their maternal uncles. An extended family may include a grand- 596 father and his wife, his sons, their wives and children, and his unmarried daughters, with classes and nomenclatures mentioned in the foregoing tables.

613 The phrase *epata lia tate* (or *aluse*) means "family of my father" and includes all relatives on the father's side. The words *epata lia*

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Social Life

fines were in their hands. If he murdered one of the royal family 682
he was killed after he had paid the fine." The punishment of a woman [562]
who has committed a murder is the same as that for a man.

Ombulungu is the name given to trial by poison ordeal. The 695
medicine-man holds out both his hands, in each of which there is a potato, only one of which is poisoned. The accused man says, "If I have done this thing, this potato will be poison for me. If I have not done this thing, this potato will be food for me." The complainant says, "If this is not the man who poisoned my brother, this potato will be poison for me." They sit in front of the medicine-man, and each must take the potato in the hand opposite to him. The poison makes a man very sick. His mouth swells so that he cannot speak.

When a woman was accused of murder her son or her brother [562]
would take her place in the poison ordeal. A boy of fifteen years of age would have the same treatment as a man. "I don't think a girl would kill anybody. I never heard about it," said Ngonga. It appears that resort was made to a medicine-man when the accused was thought to have committed murder by poison or magic. If the murderer used weapons, the accuser, who was usually a relative, was entitled to kill him with the kind of weapon used for the crime.

The penalties for adultery were the same as those for murder. 684
The woman appears to have escaped punishment, except that "her husband would not have her any more." The male adulterer had to pay the husband; if he could not pay or escape, the husband had the right to kill him. In the old days the price for adultery was two oxen, a pig, and a slave. At the present day a man who has committed adultery and made payment, possibly takes the woman and all children under three years of age. The husband has the right to decide whether the adulterer has the privilege of taking the woman and her children. An adulterer with one of the king's wives was castrated but not killed. He might, instead of mutilation, pay a very [567]
high price, while he himself along with his sisters and the sons of his sisters, would become slaves of the king. If a man could not pay, he might be sold as a slave in order to provide money for the fine. Criminal law did not distinguish between responsibility for inten- [671]
tional and unintentional offences.

It is very difficult to say how much of the old law survives. One 681
feels that underneath the ostensible Portuguese rule there is an active 177
native life that is resisting subjugation.

Only two years ago Ngonga paid an ox to prevent one of his female 686
relatives from being pawned. Within the past ten years Ngonga has

3: Hambly E-5 (1929-1930) 1934 FP13 Mbundu FP13

undu, and Ngalangi are said to have had conflicts. In time past, as at the present day, a king reigned over territory which was extensive but definitely delimited for purposes of administration. Encroachment of one king on the rights of taxation and administration of another led to raids and reprisals. Village chiefs collected taxes in the form of agricultural produce and gave these to the king, who personally visited a village from which payments had not been made. A folklore story begins, "The people had not paid taxes so the king came to the village and told them a parable."

A king, if young, accompanied his people on the warpath. There was, however, a permanent leader named *kesongo*, a derivative from *songola* ("to lead"). The declaration of war, likewise the tactics, were discussed by a council of *olosekulu* ("village chiefs") in the *ombala* ("capital") where the king had, and still has, a royal compound. If war had been conducted among sections of the Ovimbundu, the defeated people had to pay taxes and tribute; moreover, their women and cattle were taken. In event of a successful war against the Vachokue there was plundering of cattle and women, but it was not found practicable to exact periodical payments from the enemy.

The subject of warfare is intimately related to that of slavery. There was until very recent times a domestic slavery which followed from the inability of a person to pay his debts. In connection with this reduction of free persons to a condition of slavery there are several points of exceptional interest. The debtor himself is not taken as a slave, neither are his wife or children. The correct procedure is a sale of his sister's children; but more frequently the children themselves are taken by the creditor. "The debtor's sister will say nothing because this is the law of the Ovimbundu." If payment of the debt is made later, the children are set free. Usually the word pawning is used by ethnologists to describe this proceeding.

Further consideration of Ngonga's payment to his mother's brother clarifies the facts of domestic slavery. "I paid for them, I took their place," said my interpreter. The payment for the return of these two children was two oxen. The girl, who was ten years of age when she was taken to pay the debt, was returned to her people when she was a woman with three children. Ngonga's brother was not actually taken from his home. He was made to pay his mother's brother's debt by working for the creditor. In general, these domestic slaves were not ill treated, though their rights were limited. The position of slaves taken from a hostile

567 people, especially if they were from outside the Ovimbundu, was one of absolute and abject servitude.

The master had rights of punishment including a death sentence; but Ngonga says that a slave could appeal to the headman of the village if he were starved and cruelly treated. All children of a slave became slaves of the master. As the slave had no property he could not pay a fine; the master would pay the fine then relieve his feelings by beating the slave. Instead of paying the fine the master might sell the slave.

Slaves were not branded or marked in any way. Ngonga has seen runaway slaves hunted with dogs. A slave was not allowed to buy his own freedom. A master could dispose of his slave girls in marriage; for instance, a young girl might be sold to an old man. The condition of the slave is well expressed in Ngonga's own words: "The slave worked hard at everything, then the master said he had done nothing."

Slaves used to go to war to fight with their masters against an enemy. A slave might become a blacksmith or a hunter, two very esteemed occupations, but all his work would be for the master. Ngonga says there was no slave market belonging to the Ovimbundu, but every man knew where he could buy a slave. Slaves could act as witnesses in a trial. Slave women were not lent out for prostitu-
[585] tion. A slave owner did not have promiscuous intercourse with his
[768] slave women, but he chose two or three girls as concubines. A slave girl who was married to a free man would revert to her master along with her children when her husband died. If a master had married his own slave woman she would, at his death, become the property of his eldest brother and her children would go with her. In some instances the slave woman and her children would be given to the son of her master's brother.

VILLAGE ORGANIZATION

361 When choosing a site for a new village, a preference is shown for a hillside, though woods or valleys are at times selected. The foot of cliffs is a favorite site. In addition to the shade afforded by the cliff there was in time past the advantage of being hidden from the view of enemies. Further shelter was afforded by the planting of wild fig trees. Sometimes an *ombala* ("capital") was rendered picturesque by the planting of trees which grow to a great size; such a plan was followed at the *ombala* of Ngalangi.

Caves in the wall of a cliff, likewise rugged hillsides, gave a place of retreat for women and children during an attack. Usually there

3: Hambly E-5 (1929-1930) 1934 FP13 Mbundu FP13

171 428 this method is characteristic of many pastoral tribes of south and east Africa.

171 611 The Ovimbundu are situated between two systems of reckoning descent, succession, and inheritance; namely, the Negro system of the Congo region, and that of the eastern and southern cattle-keeping people. In view of the culture contacts described in Chapter X, the mixed system of the Ovimbundu is intelligible.

On the one hand the Ovimbundu emphasize the rights of the mother's brother while denying inheritance to a wife and her children, but in royal families the eldest son of the principal wife succeeds to kingship. Among commoners descent is reckoned through both the father and the mother. Therefore the inference is that the [174] Ovimbundu have, by virtue of their position and contacts, made a blending of two distinct social systems, one of which gives succession to office in the male line, while the other gives inheritance in the female line. In their system of burial rites for kings the Ovimbundu follow the usages of the pastoral area.

171 608 Exchange of blood is an Umbundu custom resembling that which occurs widely in Negro Africa. This exchange of blood is the typical Negro form of the blood brotherhood. Another rite is the Hamitic custom of drinking a mixture of blood and milk; this the Ovimbundu do not practise.

171 241 The hoe-cultivation practised by Ovimbundu women is in agreement with Baumann's association of hoe-culture and matriarchal conditions, the latter being indicated by the importance of the mother's brother. These concomitant factors are shown by Baumann (II, p. 292) to be characteristic of a wide area in the Congo basin. To this area may be added the whole of central Angola.

171 567 The factors of slavery among the Ovimbundu are in agreement with all that is known of the treatment of slaves in the Congo area and farther west Africa. Slaves of the Ovimbundu taken in warfare were treated with less consideration than those who passed into slavery to redeem a debt. There was also discrimination in favor of slaves taken in local quarrels among the Ovimbundu themselves. The killing and eating of slaves in north Angola is a custom whose early occurrence has already been noted.

AFRICAN PUBERTY RITES

171 881 Initiation ceremonies for boys and girls are at present well preserved among the Vachokue of eastern Angola; for a period such ceremonies declined among the Ovimbundu, but there is now a

6:Edwards E-5 (1955-1956)1962
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and the European population greatly increased.[28] In some areas at this time a confused situation arose, in which 'robber barons', white and black, tyrannized over chiefs and villagers and engaged in the still vigorous slave trade, which now had acquired a few disguises on the coast.[29]

In 1911 the rubber trade ended, and about the same time slavery and the slave trade were effectively suppressed.[30] From this time onwards, too, civil administration began to be effective and the Benguela Railway became the most important link between the coast and the interior.[31] The trade disappeared, powers of the chiefs declined. The missions, both Catholic and Protestant, which had relatively little influence during the rubber trade period, gained more and more converts.[32]

2. *Ethnography*

Between the Ovimbundu and the sea lie the Hanya, the Nganda, and the Tjisanji tribes of whom little is known except that the Hanya and Nganda seem to be culturally related to the Ovimbundu.[33] To the south are the Nyaneka-Humbi group, cattle-keeping peoples who are culturally and linguistically related to the Ovimbundu, but who did not participate in the trade.[34] To the east lie the Ngangela[35], the Luimbi, and the

[28] Childs, pp. 210–11.

[29] For an account of Umbundu country at this time see H. W. Nevison, *A Modern Slavery*, New York, 1906. In Gumba I was told that Mutu-ya-Kevela the leader of the 1902–3 revolt had raided villages for slaves but that Samakaka whom Childs (p. 22) describes as a robber baron was spoken of favourably.

[30] Slavery had been legally suppressed from 1878. The slaves were called by other names but no effective change was made till 1910. See A. Bastos, *Monografia de Catumbella* in *Bol. Soc. Geog. Lisboa*, 1910 (pp. 74–81, 105–9, 141–55, 180–5, 225–8, 251–5, 279–5).

[31] Childs, p. 228.

[32] Ibid., pp. 220–23. Personal information.

[33] Ibid., p. 8.

[34] On these peoples see Estermann, *Etnografia do Sudoeste de Angola*, Vol. II.

[35] A tribe using this word as the root of the tribal name is to be found to the south-east of Umbundu country in the area round Vila Artur de Paiva. Padre A. Van Horrik, formerly of the Missão Católica de Cubango, tells me that the map contained in M. McCulloch, *The Southern Lunda and Related Peoples*, (London, 1951) should show the Ngangela as occupying much of the area actually assigned to the Mbwela and the south-eastern Ovimbundu. Mbwela does not seem to be the name any tribe uses for itself (Private information, Estermann and Van Horrik).

6:Edwards E-5 (1955-1956)1962
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journeys diminished in distance as they increased in profitability.[53]

My informants, however, gave a somewhat different picture. Long trading journeys were still being undertaken in the last decade of the trade (1901–11). Some men whom I met had travelled to the kingdom of the Mwata Yamvo and beyond to Luba country; one man had made a journey into what is now the Congo Republic which took a year to go and a year to return; another had visited Barotseland. It should be said that these seem to have been unusually long journeys; journeys totalling six to eight months were common.[54]

The significance of the trade in social life is reflected in the mystical explanations of success in business found in Umbundu religion. Prosperity might be explained either by the favour of spirits such as Kandundu and Otjipukú, who received at their shrines libations of wine, or by malevolent sorcery involving the sacrifice of relatives in exchange for wealth.[55] The existence of these two explanations probably reflects the existence of some rich men who satisfied the expectations of their relatives and others who did not.

Apart from the rubber trade, the older slave trade continued until its vigorous suppression in the period 1910–12, and indeed seems, as regards the Ovimbundu, to have become intensified in the period after 1890. The slaves went to S. Tome and Principe, or to coastal plantations. Up to that time the Ovimbundu had sold few of their own people, with the exception of criminals or people who had become generally unpopular with their kin. The collapse of the old political system played into the hands of adventurers who unscrupulously exploited the Umbundu custom of debt slavery or conducted raids for this purpose.[56]

It was then the 'trade' which was the common factor in the life of all Ovimbundu, and which was so to speak the factor,

[53] Childs, p. 208.

[54] Informants.

[55] Although some old men still have shrines to the luck-giving spirits it is not possible to see how their cult functioned in the social structure then existing. It is, however, notable that success could be interpreted mystically in two ways by benevolent spirits or by sorcery.

[56] Childs, p. 213. I was told that Gumba had been raided from Bailundo.